

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 3, 6, 8 to 16, and 20 remain pending.

Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,171,860 to Codignola. Claim 17 was cancelled in the Amendment mailed April 12, 2007. Thus, the rejection is moot.

Claims 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for failure to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. The rejection of claims 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is overcome. Instances of the use of the terms "preferably" and "substantially" have been deleted therein. The rejection of claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is moot since it was cancelled in the Amendment mailed April 12, 2007.

Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 15 to 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Boncheva et al. article. The rejection is overcome in view of the previous incorporation of the feature of dependent claim 5 into independent claim 1 in the Amendment mailed April 12, 2007. The Action stated that claim 5 was objected to but allowable if rewritten in independent form. Thus, claim 1 and all claims dependent or ultimately dependent on claim 1 are allowable.

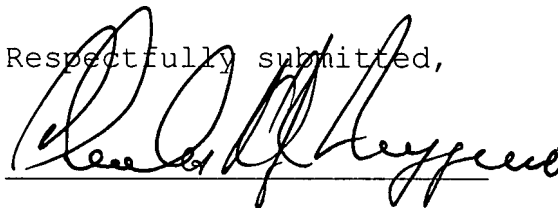
The Action also stated that claims 6 and 14 were objected to but allowable if rewritten in independent form. The incorporation of the feature of claim 5 into claim 1 renders moot the need to rewrite claims 6 and 14 since they depend on claim 1.

The rejection of claims 17 to 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Boncheva et al. article is moot since they were cancelled in the Amendment mailed April 12, 2007.

Reconsideration of claims 1 to 3, 6, 8 to 16, and 20 is deemed warranted in view of the foregoing. Allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Dated: July *13*, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles N. J. Ruggiero", written over a horizontal line.

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